



**U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
BUREAU FOR DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT, AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE (DCHA)
OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (OFDA)**

Morocco – Earthquake

Fact Sheet #2, Fiscal Year (FY) 2004

February 27, 2004

BACKGROUND

- On February 24, an earthquake with a magnitude of 6.4 struck Al Hoceima Province in northern Morocco at 2:28 A.M. local time and aftershocks continue. The epicenter was in the Strait of Gibraltar, 185 miles east-northeast of the capital of Rabat. The closest city was Al Hoceima, a coastal city with a population of 100,000. According to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the most affected areas are rural villages near Al Hoceima where an estimated 200,000 people live in mud brick buildings unable to withstand a major temblor. The Government of Morocco (GOM) reports that the earthquake killed at least 571 people and injured an estimated 405 others.

CURRENT SITUATION

- According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), preliminary reports indicate that six remote villages in the Rif Mountains near Al Hoceima are severely affected. Local officials are particularly concerned about the villages of Ait Kamara, Tamassint, and Imzouren where approximately 30,000 people reside.
- Local media report that 13,000 people are homeless. In addition, according to the USAID/ Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART), many other residents are sleeping outside due to continuing aftershocks.
- On February 26, the official Moroccan press agency, Magreb Arab Presse, stated that the most essential needs are shelter and medical assistance.
- On February 26, UN OCHA reported that the GOM has established tent camps in Ait Kamara and Al Hoceima. The GOM military is planning to set up three additional camps equipped with electricity and water.
- According to the USAID/DART, the Ministry of Health (MOH) has established seven teams that are making a three-day circuit of all 54 health centers and 5 official tent camps to inquire about assistance needs and report daily to the MOH.
- The USAID/ DART reports that neighboring towns have delivered 70,000 loaves of bread to the affected region and the Moroccan military has set up mobile bakeries.
- According to the USAID/DART, residents continued demonstrating on February 26 for increased humanitarian assistance and some people were injured in the demonstrations.
- According to UN OCHA, the GOM halted Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) activities on February 26. However, some USAR teams have stated that they were unable to conduct USAR activities because the teams were waiting for direction from the GOM.

U.S. GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE

- On February 24, U.S. Ambassador Thomas T. Riley declared a disaster due to the damage caused by the earthquake. In response, USAID/OFDA provided \$50,000 through USAID/Morocco to the Moroccan Red Crescent for emergency relief supplies.
- On February 25, USAID activated a Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) composed of five members. The members include a Team Leader, Water and Sanitation Advisor, Information Officer, Logistics and Communications Officer, and Program Officer. The USAID/DART Team Leader arrived on February 25 and since her arrival, the USAID/DART Team Leader has met with the GOM, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and U.N. agencies to coordinate activities, in addition to traveling to the villages near Al Hoceima to assess the need for humanitarian assistance. The rest of the USAID/DART arrived in Morocco on February 27.
- On February 25, USAID/OFDA airlifted 10,000 blankets into Al Hoceima. On February 26, USAID/OFDA airlifted three emergency health kits. Each health kit serves a population of 10,000 for three months. On February 27, three flights with 712 tents, 50 generators, and 260 rolls of plastic sheeting arrived in Morocco. An additional 288 tents are scheduled to arrive on February 28. To date, the total value of USAID/OFDA commodity shipments, including transport, is \$710,859.
- On February 27, the Department of Defense dispatched a five-person Humanitarian Assistance Survey Team (HAST) with humanitarian commodities valued at approximately \$160,000 to gather information and make recommendations on how U.S. European Command (EUCOM) can best support relief efforts. The HAST is scheduled to arrive in Al Hoceima on February 28.

OTHER DONOR AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION ASSISTANCE

- On February 24, the IFRC launched an appeal for \$2.3 million to assist 30,000 beneficiaries for six months.
- On February 25, UN OCHA dispatched a U.N. Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team to the affected area to assist in the coordination of relief efforts.
- Algeria, Austria, France, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and Turkey dispatched USAR teams to the affected region.
- The U.N. Children’s Fund (UNICEF) dispatched a team on February 27 to assess the medium-term needs.
- On February 26, donor representatives in Rabat met to share information on current humanitarian assistance activities.
- The European Union has dispatched a civil protection team to assist with coordination in Al Hoceima.

PUBLIC DONATION INFORMATION

- The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations. A list of humanitarian organizations that are accepting cash donations for their earthquake response efforts in Morocco can be found in the “How Can I Help” section of www.usaid.gov – keyword “Morocco,” or by calling the Center for International Disaster Information (CIDI) at 703-276-1914.
- USAID encourages cash donations because they: allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed (often in the affected region); reduce the burden on scarce resources (such as transportation routes, staff time, warehouse space, etc); can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; ensure culturally, dietary, and environmentally appropriate assistance.
- More information on making donations and volunteering services can be found at:
 - USAID: www.usaid.gov → “Our Work” → “Humanitarian Assistance” → “Disaster Assistance” → “How Can I Help”
 - The Center for International Disaster Information: www.cidi.org or (703) 276-1914
 - InterAction: www.interaction.org → “Guide to Appropriate Giving”
- Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at www.reliefweb.int.

USAID/OFDA bulletins appear on the USAID web site at http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance/.